642.i.5

LOVE *the* CAUSE *and* CURE *of* GRIEF,

OR

The Innocent MURDERER.

A

TRAGEDY.

As it is Acted by

His MAJESTY'S Servants

AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

DRURY-LANE.

By Mr. *COOKE.*

LONDON,

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(Price One Shilling.)

TO

The RIGHT HONOURABLE

RICHARD *Earl of* BURLINGTON.

MY LORD,

WHEN I declare that I have long wiſhed for an Opportunity to pay a public Tribute of Reſpect to your Lordſhip, I more effectually recommend myſelf to the Regard of Mankind than, I fear, I am able to do by any of my Writings. Your Birth and Fortune have placed you in a Light which is always attended with Cenſure and Applauſe; but your Lordſhip's Taſte in the Sciences which are uſeful and which adorn Life, and your Benevolence, diſtinguiſh you from many of the ſame Quality with yourſelf as much as your Nobility diſtinguiſhes you from the loweſt Ranks of Men. Many are illuſtrious in their Titles only; but your Lordſhip illuſtrates your Titles by the Dignity with which you wear them. What I am ſay-

ing is, I muſt confeſs, unneceſſary; becauſe the whole Kingdom knows it of you; and your Lordſhip has erected, I was going to ſay eternal, Monuments of your Excellence in a Science which requires a delicate Caſt of Mind and the niceſt Judgement to be Maſter of, and one that is highly becoming a great Man to profeſs.

The Offering which I now make to your Lordſhip is what I muſt acknowledge myſelf well pleaſed with, or I would not preſume to approach you with it; but this Inſtance of my high Regard for your Lordſhip is not ſo much intended as an Addition to your Fame as an Indication of the true Reſpect with which I am,

MY LORD,

Your Lordſhip's

December. 1743.

moſt obedient, obliged,

and moſt humble Servant,

THOMAS COOKE.

THE PREFACE.

THERE were ſome Difficultys attending the writing this Play which are not obvious to many Readers. I took the Hint from an old legal Story in one of our Books of Reports: the Characters, as preſented in the Story, are in very low Life; and Perſons of ſuch Condition have ſeldom Qualitys or Virtues ſufficient to intereſt an Audience in their Favour; I therefore lifted the principal Characters a little higher than they are deſcribed in the Story, and ſupplyed by Invention what was wanting in Fact to render it a fit Fable for a Play: in ſhort, the whole is my own Invention, excepting the laſt Scene of the Play, and what directly relates to that Fact. The Women and young FREEMAN *are all entire Characters of my own, having no Foundation in the Story for them.*

THE PROLOGUE.

Spoke by Mr. DELANE.

WELL have the Greecian *Bards adorn'd the Stage*
With royal Sorrows, and heroic Rage:
Diſdaining Earth, with elevated Eyes,
One drew the angry Ruler of the Skys:
Boldly he call'd from their divine Abodes
Ambitious, reſtleſs, and the bleeding, Gods:
Unheeded weep'd the injur'd lowly Maid,
To Death, or Ruin, by her Love betray'd:
Neglected ſigh'd the fond deſpairing Swain,
And the proud Nymph triumphant was in vain:
The tragic Muſe caſt not her Eye ſo low,
Or view'd regardleſs Scenes of humble Woe:
Yet then Diſtreſs appear'd beneath the Shades,
And Virtue mourn'd in unfrequented Glades.
Theſe Scenes the Woes of no exalted State
Preſent, nor Satire to alarm the Great:
Here Love and Friendſhip ſhare an equal Part,
To call ſoft Pity from the tender Heart:

The pious Tear here filial Duty ſheds,
And weds a-while to Sorrow when ſhe weds;
Her virtuous Griefs, by Love ſupported, flow,
And find Relief alone from Cupid's *Bow.*

PERSONS

PERSONS *of the* PLAY.

MEN.

FREEMAN, *a Gentleman.*	Mr. BRIDGES.
Young FREEMAN, *his Son.*	Mr. HAVARD.
BRIAR, *a Farmer.*	Mr. GIFFARD.
WELDON, *a Gentleman.*	Mr. DELANE.
A JUDGE.	Mr. WINSTONE.
A SERVANT.	Mr. WOODBURN.

WOMEN.

Mrs. FREEMAN.	Mrs. ROBERTS.
Mrs. BRIAR.	Mrs. BENNET.
CHARLOTTE BRIAR.	Mrs. GIFFARD.

JURYMEN *and* WITNESSES.

The SCENE *the Country in* KENT.

LOVE

LOVE *the* CAUSE *and* CURE *of* GRIEF,

OR

The Innocent MURDERER.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SCENE *the* FIELDS.

Young FREEMAN *and* CHARLOTTE BRIAR.

Young FREEMAN.

WHY, *Charlotte*, hangs this Melancholly on thee?
Why droops my Love? Why droops my ev'ry Flow'r
Compris'd in one? Why on this happy Day,
Indulgent to our Wiſh, wilt thou indulge
Unſeaſonable Sorrow? 'Tis unkind:
Why on this Day in which the pious Man
Has join'd in Wedlock's Bands the Hands of two
Whoſe Hearts by Love were long before united?

CHARLOTTE

Ah! *Freeman*, there's the Thorn that goads my Side.
I muſt confeſs, ſince firſt our mutual Vows

Were plighted, each Day ſeem'd to me an Age,
Till I ſecur'd you mine; and now I have
Obtain'd the Purchaſe of a thouſand Sighs,
I have a thouſand Fears of loſing you.

Y. FREEMAN.

And whence ariſe thoſe Fears? From no Diſtruſt,
I hope, of one whoſe Honour's dearer to him
Than is his Life, of one who places you
In the ſame Ballance with his Life and Honour.

CHARLOTTE.

No, my much lov'd, and ever honour'd, Huſband,
I cannot entertain a Thought of Ill
Of you, yet when I think of my poor Father,
My Fears ariſe like an unfriendly Froſt,
And ſeem to blight my Joys e'en in their Spring.

Y. FREEMAN.

Thou art the lovely'ſt Roſe that ever blow'd.
'Tis true the Diff'rence which has long ſubſiſted
Betwixt our Fathers is the only Cauſe
Why we have thus conceal'd our Paſſion from them,
And why we keep our Marriage ſtill unknown;
But ſhou'd Diſſention reign among our Parents,
And everlaſting Strife be ſow'd betwixt them,
Yet ſhall our Loves immaculate remain.
Baniſh all diſmal Apprehenſions from you:
Our Loves perhaps may take a happyer Turn,
And be the Cement of perpetual Union
Betwixt our preſent jarring Familys.
I know my Father's ever gentle Nature

Is prone to pardon Injurys, and to excuſe
The little Failings of unwary Youth:
He looks not with the rigid Eye of Age,
But ever makes ſuch kind Allowances
As by the wiſe and good are always made:
In ſhort, I know that 'tis his greateſt Pleaſure
On all deſerving Perſons to beſtow
What Happyneſs he can.

CHARLOTTE.

Wou'd I cou'd ſay
The ſame of my unhappy Father! Then
My Boſom wou'd be free from many Fears
With which 'tis burden'd now: but he, poor Man,
Has by his froward Temper loſs'd his Friends,
All, but his ever duteous Wife and Child;
And our Endeavours are to cheer his Days
With gentle Words and tender Offices:
But, my dear *Freeman*, let me now intreat you
To tell the Cauſe of the long Difference
Betwixt our Parents; for I never cou'd
Diſcover it at Home.

Y. FREEMAN.

'Twas on a Treſpaſs;
For which we offer'd ample Recompence,
Which being not receiv'd, a Suit of Law
Commenc'd: your Father has already been
At more Expence than he can bear with Eaſe:
My Father has propos'd a Gentleman,
A Neighbour and a Perſon of known Worth,

To be the Arbitrator, and abide
By his Determination rather than
To feed Contention: and this is the Day
That was appointed for the Arbitration.

CHARLOTTE.

Heav'n make it fortunate; for upon that,
I fear, our Fate, or mine at leaſt, depends.

Y. FREEMAN.

Your Fate depends on me, and mine on you.
Preſume not, *Charlotte*, to affront my Love
With a Diſtruſt: 'tis of as pure a Sort
As is the Zeal of Saints who know no Sin.
My Father comes this Way: ſweet Excellence,
Retire beneath theſe Shades, while I enquire
After the Arbitration, and th' Event,
And while I try the gentleſt, beſt, of Fathers
With a Relation of my Paſſion for you:
As he receives it, and I know he will,
All correſponding with his Love to me,
I will ſoon after chuſe a fav'ring Hour
In which I'll pour my tendereſt Concerns,
Our marriage Vows, into his friendly Ear.

CHARLOTTE.

Succeſs and everlaſting Love be with you.

[*She retires.*

SCENE

SCENE II.

FREEMAN *ſenr. enters.*

FREEMAN *ſenr.*

I greet thee, *Lewis*, with a Father's Love;
And, whether 'tis Deſign or Chance that throws
Thee in my Way, I always count it Gain
To have the near me, as thou'rt near my Heart,
My Son, my beſt Companion, and my Friend.

Y. FREEMAN.

I owe you, Sir, more than is barely due
To the reſpectful Title of a Father.
Not once in five and twenty Years I've ſeen
The Shadow of the Hand of Rigour o'er me.
What I remember of my infant Days
Were all with Pleaſure and with Fondneſs crown'd:
And while at College I purſued my Studys
Pleaſures flow'd on me in a thouſand Streams
From the rich Fountains of old *Greece* and *Rome*:
And now the Virtues of the beſt of Fathers,
The ſocial Virtues, have beſtow'd on me
All that I wiſh'd to meet with in a Friend.

FREEMAN *ſenr.*

Thou art the Harveſt of my Life's long Toil;
And the rich Crop rewards my Labour well.

Y. FREEMAN.

Your Peace, Sir, is among my firſt Concerns,

I therefore ſhall be glad if you'll inform me
How the long Conteſt is at laſt determin'd.

FREEMAN *ſenr.*

To my Content, tho to my Coſt: our Friend
Weldon, who was appointed Arbitrator,
Such is his Heart fraught with Benevolence,
Franckly propos'd to pay Half *Briar*'s Charge,
Rather than ſee Contention kep'd alive
Betwixt two Neighbours, who ſhou'd live as Friends.
The generous Propoſal was applauded;
But 'twas my Choice to pay the whole myſelf,
Hoping by that to gain a quiet Neighbour:
The poor Man hates me for no other Cauſe
But that I'm more ſucceſsful than himſelf.

Y. FREEMAN.

Poor *Charlotte*, ſweet and fair, thou faultleſs, Flow'r,
How much unlike the Stock from which you ſprung!

FREEMAN *Senr.*

What Maiden was it that I hear'd you name
In Terms ſo tender that I thought they ſpoke
Her Sov'reign of your Wiſhes and your Heart?

Y. FREEMAN.

'Twas *Briar*'s Daughter, Sir.

FREEMAN *ſenr.*

Deal with me, *Lewis*,
As you wou'd with a Friend to whom you'd ſworn
Inviolable Truth and Confidence;
And you ſhall find that open Heart in me,
And ſuch an unreſerv'd Regard, which you

might

Might juſtly hope to meet with in a Friend
Who had repos'd as dear a Truſt in you.
Tho I have weather'd thro near ſixty Years,
I've not forgot what the ſoft Paſſions are;
And I miſtake, if ſtill I cannot read
The Language of the Eyes; which is to me,
Who have paſs'd thro the various Scenes of Love,
As legible as Characters in Gold.
I perceiv'd plainly, when you nam'd the Maid,
That Change of Countenance, and Change of Voice,
Which tell me that your Boſom has receiv'd
A Gueſt which you deſire to entertain:
If it is ſo, communicate to me;
And ſhew not that Reſerv'dneſs in yourſelf,
Which you ſhall never find in me your Friend.

Y. FREEMAN.

No; be my Love my Curſe, if e'er I wrong
So good a Father, and ſo true a Friend.
There are ſome Errors paſs'd; but, by the Friendſhip
Which you profeſs to me, I beg you wou'd not
Enquire into them yet: what now I aſk
Is your Conſent to proſecute my Love:
That ſhe is fair all who have Eyes can tell;
She has ſuch Virtues to adorn her Life,
As in themſelves will be an ample Dow'r.

FREEMAN *ſenr.*

I've often ſeen the Girl, and mark'd her well;
And I acknowledge that I think your Paſſion,
With all th' Extravagance of youthful Heat,

Can

Can not deſcribe her lovelyer than ſhe is:
And, by the ſacred Name of him that cloaths
The Earth with Beauty, and the Stars with Light,
Was ſhe as poor as is the ſunburn'd Wench
That ſtoops to take the Gleanings of my Fields,
I wou'd myſelf perform the Father's Office,
And give her Hand to thee, ſo much, my Son,
My own Felicity depends on thine.

Y. FREEMAN.

Then may that Son ne'er know the ſweet Poſſeſſion
Of her whom his Soul loves, if ever he
With his Conſent ſhou'd give that Father Pain.

FREEMAN *ſenr.*

Yet, my dear Son, methinks there is a Bar,——
Nay, do not ſtart: it is not ſuch a Bar
As ſhall obſtruct the End which you propoſe,
But may a-while delay the ſweet Poſſeſſion.
My Family is of a low Beginning:
My Forefathers ſeem to have been no more
Than lab'ring poor Inhabitants of *Kent*,
The humble Tillers of another's Land;
And all my Heritage was the long Leaſe
Which has been oft' renew'd from Son to Son.
When I was young, my Perſon was the Theme
Of many a loveſic Maid and jealous Swain;
Yet, while my Ears were fill'd with my own Praiſe,
Nor Vanity, nor Pride, cou'd reach my Heart:
I flouriſh'd then in Man's Opinion fair.
Your Mother then was, like your *Charlotte* now,

The

The Virgin's Envy, and the Wiſh of Men:
Her Parents dy'd when ſhe was young, and left her
Ten thouſand Pounds: I was her partial Choice
Againſt the Approbation of her Friends:
Her Father was a Gentleman: on that
She has too often and too much preſum'd.
Now to the End to which my Tale has led:
I doubt your Mother's Pride will make her ſtart
Objections to the Match; but it ſhall never
Prevent it: what I mean is for her Peace
To uſe ſome Art to draw her gently in
To give Conſent: I'm going Home, and there
I'll try her with the Secret of your Love:
Perhaps you're bound another Way. Farewel:
My Bleſſing's ever with you. [Freeman *ſenr. goes.*

SCENE III.

CHARLOTTE *enters.*

Y. FREEMAN.

Beſt of Men;
Come forth, reveal thyſelf, thou happy Bride:
Come from the Covert, I'll purſue my Chace;
And thou, my lovely Game, ſhalt ev'ry Morn
Wake with the waking Day to Happyneſs.
My Father views thee with a Parent's Eye:
Now let the Bus'neſs of our Lives be Love.

CHARLOTTE

I hear'd him paſs the joyful Sentence on me:
My Taſk is now to come, to move my Father;
Whoſe great Neceſſity perhaps may prove
My greateſt Bleſſing; for, ſo well I know him,
If he was able to beſtow on me
A Portion equal to your own, he'd ſooner
Match me below, and far below, myſelf
Than let me be the Wife of *Freeman*'s Son.

Y. FREEMAN.

Come, my *Charlotte*, we'll go to him together,
Together we'll preſent ourſelves to him
The fondeſt Pair that ever plighted Vows.
I'll ſave my charming Bride from the Confuſion
Of telling the ſoft Story of her Paſſion:
I'll be myſelf the Orator of Love,
And tell our Tale in ſuch a moving Strain,
As, was his Heart wrap'd in *Siberian* Snow,
Shou'd melt his frozen Breaſt: I'll paint a Proſpect
Of Happyneſs to us and to himſelf,
And ſuch a Proſpect as ſhould bribe him to us,
Was he as ſavage as th' *Hyrcanian* Tyger.
Throw into future Hours, my Love, thine Eyes,
And ſee what Scenes of Bliſs before us riſe,
Where Peace for ever dwells, nor enters Care,
And *Love* the little God that governs there.

The End of the firſt ACT.

ACT

ACT II. SCENE I.

BRIAR'S *Houſe.*

BRIAR *and* CHARLOTTE.

BRIAR.

YES, *Charlotte*, yes, my Child, to make you happy,
I'll curb my Rage, I'll bridle up my Hate:
The bitter Indignation, which I bear
To *Freeman*, is not level'd at his Son:
I will love him, my Girl, for loving you.

CHARLOTTE.

O! may your Days be long, and proſp'rous all!
He ſurely is the ſweeteſt, gentleſt, Youth,
That ever trod the Plains, or woo'd a Maid.

BRIAR.

Daughter, I freely muſt confeſs to you,
That I ne'er thought 'twas in the Pow'r of Words
To throw my Temper into ſuch a Mold,
As the young Man has lately fram'd it to:

His Language found a Paſſage to my Heart,
And made me wiſh the Son of *Freeman* well.

CHARLOTTE.

What do my Eyes behold? My *Freeman*'s Mother!
Come, I ſuppoſe, to bleſs me with her Voice:
I ſhall grow mad with Joy.

BRIAR.

Does the proud Dame
Once condeſcend to enter *Briar*'s Roof!

SCENE II.

Mrs. FREEMAN *enters.*

BRIAR.

Madam, this unexpected Viſit here ———

Mrs. FREEMAN.

No ſlight Occaſion wou'd have brought me here.
My Huſband has inform'd me that my Son
Has, in the laviſh Moments of his Love,
Made to your Girl an Off'ring of his Heart.

BRIAR.

And you are come to make us ſenſible
Of the great Honour which you now intend us.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

An Honour that's too great for you or her.

BRIAR.

Believe me, Madam, you are too preſuming.

Whate'er

Whate'er your Bus'neſs is, tell it in Words
As plain as is the Man to whom you ſpeak.

CHARLOTTE.

O! my poor Heart on what a Wreck thou'rt thrown!
(To herſelf.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

Then plainly my Deſign is this, to tell you
That your Thoughts ſoar above your low Condition.
Whate'er my Son's miſguided Love may be,
Whate'er his Father's Reſolution is,
Your Daughter ne'er muſt wed a Son of mine.
Look round about you, and you ſoon may find
A Husband for the Girl that ſuits her Birth
Among the lab'ring honeſt Hinds of *Kent*.

CHARLOTTE.

Alas! whatever is my humble Lot,
Eternal Bleſſings be on *Freeman*'s Head! [*She weeps.*

BRIAR.

Waſte not a Tear, my Child.—Woman be gone;
Civility to thee wou'd be a Crime.
Know that my Daughter, cloath'd by Nature's Hand
With artleſs Beauty, and adorn'd with Truth
And Modeſty, wou'd grace thy Family
With ſuch a Picture of the female Sex
As never yet it ſaw.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

I tell thee, Man———

BRIAR.

I tell thee, Woman, I will hear no more.

Your

Your own unmeaning Pride was the firſt Cauſe
Of all my Hate to *Freeman*'s Family,
Which has encreas'd with Time, and now is fix'd,
Faſt as the Roots of Oaks, in *Briar*'s Heart.
As for my Child, ſhe ſhall this Day be ſent
Where *Freeman*'s Son ſhall ne'er behold her more.
Away, my Ears are deaf to your Reply.

[*He thruſts her out.*

SCENE III.

CHARLOTTE.

My Father, O! my ever honour'd Father,
Let not your Reſolution made in Anger
Deſtroy the Peace, and break the tender Heart,
Of your much lov'd, and ever loving, Daughter,
In your Reſentment to a haughty Woman.

BRIAR.

Did ſhe not treat that Daughter with Diſdain?
I never will forgive th' inſulting Dame:
If you're deſirous of a Father's Love,
Baniſh young *Freeman* from your Breaſt forever.

CHARLOTTE.

Impute not to my *Freeman*, my dear *Freeman*,
A Fault that's not his own, no Part his own:
I dare engage, for him and for his Father,
That neither gave Conſent to what ſhe has done:
Unknown to them, ſhe raſhly has purſued
The Dictates of her Pride and ſettled Hate.

BRIAR.

BRIAR.

Then from that Pride and ſettled Hate ſhall grow
Plagues which ſhall taint her ev'ry Hour of Life.
I'll ſend you to your Uncle: his Regard
For you will equal mine: he has a Son,
Who long has view'd you with a Lover's Eye,
Whoſe Honeſty and Induſtry will make you
A joyful Mother and a happy Wife.

CHARLOTTE.

O! name no Huſband for your Child but *Freeman:*
I have a Reaſon, Sir, which I cou'd give,
That wou'd diſarm you of your Rage, and change
Your Reſolution. —— Look on me with Pity:
I cannot leave my Love, nor wou'd offend
My Father whom I love. —— O! woeful Caſe!
Here comes my Advocate; to whom I fly
For Refuge; in whoſe Breaſt I muſt repoſe
The Secret of our Marriage.

SCENE IV.

Mrs. BRIAR *enters.*

CHARLOTTE.

Deareſt Mother,
O! help to break the Storm that's low'ring o'er me:
My unkind Father, tho he means me well,
Is tearing me from all that I hold dear

On Earth, except himſelf and you, he threatens
To rend me from my *Freeman*, from my Love.

Mrs. BRIAR.

With the Submiſſion of an humble Wife,
With Earneſtneſs I now intreat my Huſband
To recollect the Vows he pay'd to me.
Had I, when of our Daughter's Age, been torn
From you, I ſhou'd not now, ſo well I know
My Heart, have liv'd to intercede for her.

BRIAR.

Doſt thou imagine that thou lov'ſt the Girl
Better than I, or doſt thou think thyſelf
More wiſe and able to contrive her Good
Than is thine Huſband?

Mrs. BRIAR.

I am not ſo vain,
(For humble as my Fortune is my Mind,)
I'm not ſo vain, I ſay, to think myſelf
So wiſe and able to contrive as you;
Nor do I think my Love exceeds your own
For our dear Child; but I believe I know
The painful Workings of her tender Heart,
By what I well remember to have felt
Myſelf for you.

CHARLOTTE.

Heaven give
Her Words Succeſs. [*Aſide.*

BRIAR.

But if I once reſolve,

Your

Your Words are ſpent in vain, idly they paſs
Like gentle Winds over the ſtanding Corn,
Ruffle the Ears, but leave no Trace behind.
My Brother's Son ſhall make her ſoon a Bride:
I'm going to prepare her for her Journey;
Do you prepare the Girl to bear it well. [*He goes.*

SCENE V.

Mrs. BRIAR.

I wou'd perſuade you to your Eaſe, my Child:
And, if there is a Way to ſhun the Match
Which in his Rage your Father has propos'd,
I will aſſiſt you with a Mother's Zeal,
While I can act conſiſtent with the Duty
Of Parent and of Wife.

CHARLOTTE.

Then I've ſome Hopes.
Let us retire into your Chamber: there
I will relate to you the Secret which
I dread to tell my Father in his Anger:
There I'll deſcribe to you the lovely'ſt Youth,
That ever fill'd a Virgin's Ear with Truth.
[*They go.*

SCENE VI.

FREEMAN's *Houſe.*

FREEMAN *ſenr. Mrs.* FREEMAN, *and young* FREEMAN.

Y. FREEMAN.

'Tis cruel, Madam, 'tis unmercyful,
Thus to afflict, to torture thus, the Heart
Of an obedient and a tender Son;
But I'll complain no more of your Unkindneſs:
Charlotte I come once more to try the Art
Of ſoft Perſuaſion, which my Love inſpires.

[*He goes.*

SCENE VII.

FREEMAN *ſenr.*

Ungenerous Dame, look backward to the Day
In which I firſt engag'd my Love to you,
And ſay if you can call to Mind a Moment
In which I ever croſs'd your Purpoſes.
Your Beautys, whoſe Attraction once was great,
Have ſuffer'd not but by the Hand of Time:
Care never prey'd upon your roſy Cheeks;
Nor have your Eyes e'er met an angry Brow

From

From me till now: all your Inclinings I
Have always with a lib'ral Heart indulg'd:
Say, is it therefore kind, or honourable,
Thus to proclaim an open War with me,
To fight againſt my Will in an Affair
On which depends our Son's Felicity?

Mrs. FREEMAN.

The Honour of my Family's concern'd:
Why ſhou'd my Blood contaminate itſelf,
By mixing with ſo low and vile a Race,
If I am able to prevent the Evil?

FREEMAN *ſenr.*

That Pride, unſocial and unmeaning Pride,
Shou'd thus ſurvive the Mem'ry of your Love!
Preſume to talk of Family no more;
That has been bandy'd in my Ear too long:
Our Currents, which have thirty Years been join'd,
Make but one Stream in him. Have you forgot
That your Son's Caſe was once your own? If you
Forget, I'll wake that Nature in your Breaſt
Which you ſhou'd ne'er have ſuffer'd to have ſleep'd.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

I never ſaw this Rage in him before. [*To herſelf.*
I can receive Rebuke, or hear Advice,
If you deliver it with a ſofter Voice.

FREEMAN *ſenr.*

You've been unus'd to my Rebuke, and deaf,
Deaf as the Adder, to your Huſband's Voice,
When he adviſ'd you; therefore when the Peace,

The Intereſt, of my Family's concern'd,
I muſt not, as in ſlight Affairs I've done,
Suffer your Pride and Humours to direct,
Where Honour and where Wiſdom ſhou'd preſide.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

I ſee my Error, (nor too late I hope,)
And earneſtly repent my late Miſdoings.
Your former Lenity and Tenderneſs
Convince me of your Goodneſs and your Love:
If you'll forget, or if you can forgive,
All my paſs'd Conduct which has giv'n you Pain,
My ev'ry Hour to come ſhall all be paſs'd
In humble Reſignation to your Will,
And in Submiſſion, an unfeign'd Submiſſion,
To your ſuperior Wiſdom and your Pow'r.

FREEMAN *ſenr.*

Diveſted of your Pride, and cloath'd with Truth,
And with the Saint's Attire Humility,
You are as lovely to my Eyes as when
I led you bluſhing to the bridal Bed.
Wou'd Woman learn what is her lovely'ſt Dreſs,
She wou'd not wiſh to make Admirers gaze
At the rich Tiſſue, or the Di'mond's Blaze:
In humble Beauty cloath'd, her beſt Attire,
She'd either keep alive, or wake, Deſire.

[*They go.*

SCENE

SCENE VIII.

BRIAR's *Houſe.*

Y. FREEMAN *aud* BRIAR.

Y. FREEMAN.

Once more I tell you, Sir, with Truth aſſure you,
That what my Mother did was all unknown
To us.

BRIAR.

It may be ſo; yet ſhall my Child
Ne'er be ſubjected to her hateful Pride,
Who, in her peeviſh Moods, wou'd ev'ry Day
Upbraid her with her Father's Lowlyneſs;
And who wou'd let her know that all ſhe wears
Is but the Badge of Charity. Rather
Than match my Girl to Wretchedneſs like that,
I'd throw her on the barren Heath to dwell
In a poor homely Hut, thatch'd by the Hands
Of her laborious Huſband, whoſe hard Toil
Shou'd be their chief Support, while ſhe at Home
Plys, from the morning to the ev'ning Sun,
The Spinning-Wheel, a conſtant houſehold Drudge.

Y. FREEMAN.

My Mother now repents her Raſhneſs, and
Wiſhes to call your Child her own.

BRIAR.

BRIAR.

Which ſhe
Shall never do: I thank her for her Viſit;
For ſhe by that has ſhew'd me what a Fury
My poor Child has eſcap'd.

Y. FREEMAN.

With the Reſpect
Due to the Fountain of my *Charlotte*'s Life——

BRIAR.

Your Eloquence, young Man, will now be vain:
All you can ſay to me no more can move me
Than can contending Winds remove a Mountain.

Y. FREEMAN.

Since my Intreatys fail, I muſt demand.
Reſtore to me my Wife, my Virgin Wife,
Whom yeſter Sun, with an unclouded Face,
Beheld in Wedlock's Bands to *Freeman* join'd.

BRIAR.

O! this is well, you pillage firſt my Fold,
And then with an undaunted Brow demand
The Lamb that I've retaken from the Thief.
The Negligence with which you've treated me,
By daring to ſeduce my Child to Marriage,
Without ſo much as aſking my Conſent,
Shews me in what mean Light you place her Father:
But know, unthinking Youth, this Diſreſpect
Throws thee as far from my Regard as is
The Weſt from Eaſt; and I will part my Daughter,

If

If I am able, I will part her from you,
As far aſunder as the North and South.

Y. FREEMAN.

You can as ſoon drive from the Stars their Brightneſs,
As from my *Charlotte*'s Thoughts expel her *Freeman*;
Where-e'er ſhe is, ſhe will be always mine;
You can as ſoon make Vice and Virtue one,
As you can make my lov'd, my faithful, Bride
Beſtow her Heart or Hand on any other:
She is my Wife, and, dow'rleſs as ſhe is,
More lov'd by me than by the Eye the Light,
Or by the Ear than is the Charmer's Voice:
I go, but I ſhall come to you again,
And make you render up a true Account
Of the great Pleaſure you withhold from me. [*He goes.*

SCENE IX.

BRIAR.

Young *Freeman* and my Daughter have not yet
Conſummated their Loves; without Delay
Charlotte ſhall therefore wed my Brother's Son.

SCENE X.

Mrs. BRIAR *enters.*

BRIAR.

What have you done? Have you prevail'd on her
To bear her parting with a patient Mind?

BRIAR

Mrs. BRIAR.

So ſtrong a Hold has *Freeman* on her Heart,
That neither you nor I can tear him thence.

BRIAR.

'Tis her firſt Love, and it muſt coſt ſome Tears.

BRIAR.

The Youth is lovely in his Perſon, and,
By her Account, poſſeſs'd of ev'ry Art
To captivate the Soul of Innocence:
He has ſuch Virtues, and ſuch Qualitys;
Which ever muſt ,ſhe ſays, ſecure the Heart
Which he by Tenderneſs and Honour won.

BRIAR

You ſeem to dwell upon his Praiſe with Pleaſure.—
You, I ſuppoſe, indulge the fooliſh Girl
In her fond Commendations of her Lover.——

Mrs. BRIAR.

I have exerted all th' Authority
Which, in a Caſe like this, a Mother ought;
All the Perſuaſions which I think are juſt
I've us'd, yet wou'd not uſe Authority
With Cruelty, nor wou'd perſuade my Child
To that which may make all her future Life
Unhappy, and perhaps that Life but ſhort.

BIAR.

The Journey is not long, I'll to my Brother's
Go with the Girl myſelf, and ſee her marry'd
Before I leave the Place.

Mrs. BRIAR.

Mrs. BRIAR.

If ever I
Found Favour in your Eyes, if ever I
Have merited your Love, hear me this once
A tender Mother, and a faithful Wife.

BRIAR.

Be quick; I cannot hear long Speeches now.

Mrs. BRIAR.

This once, excuſe my Tears, and I have done.
If to your Brother's Son you wed our Child,
You marry Poverty to Beggary,
And make the Girl a Slave, a wretched Slave,
Match'd to an abject Clown that ſhe abhors:
Think therefore, for I know you love her well,
How you can bear to ſee her live a poor
Unhappy Wife, a Stranger to Content!
And if her Life's cut ſhort, which Heaven forbid,
By Grief, how will you then bedew her Cheeks
With Tears, with frantic and with fruitleſs Tears!
Now turn your Eye, from this dark diſmal Proſpect,
To the fair Scene which *Freeman*'s Love preſents:
The Huſband of her Choice will crown her Days
With Tenderneſs and Joy; and we, perhaps,
May ſhare their Fortunes as we ſhare their Love.
Diſtreſs, that ſeems approaching to our Door,
May by this Match be drove entirely from us.
I've done; I'll trouble you no more; and now
The Language of my Heart has paſs'd my Lips,
I'm all Obedience to my Husband's Will.

BRIAR.

Thou tendereſt Mother, and thou gentleſt Wife,
That ever bleſs'd a Husband and a Child,
Lead in thy ſilken Bands this ſavage Man.
Thou laſt ſubdu'd me to thy Wiſh. Stand there,
And let me view the Treaſure of my Soul,
Above all Price, to which I never ow'd
A reſtleſs Night, or an unpeaceful Day.
Fortune may throw her keeneſt Arrows here,
While you, the dear Phyſician of my Mind,
Shall heal the Wounds and Bruiſes which they give.
By that high Providence which gave thee to me,
I wou'd not for all *Freeman*'s Wealth, nor for
The wide, the fruitful, and the rich, Poſſeſſion
Of ev'ry Hill, and Grove, and Vale, in *Kent*,
Give up the Title that I have in thee.
Come, my ſweet Monitor, my humble Guide,
Now you've ſubdued my Heart, direct my Hand;
For I'll this very Moment write to *Freeman*,
And offer your Propoſals for the Marriage. [*They go.*

SCENE XI.

FREEMAN's *Houſe.*

Y. FREEMAN.

Hark! is not that the Charmer's Voice afar,
That crys, come FREEMAN, haſte to reſcue me,

And

And ſnatch me from the Snares which now ſurround me!
I come, O! Nymph divine, to ſeize my Right,
Reſolv'd to bear away my lovely Prize,
Or periſh in th' Attempt.

[*As he goes towards the Door*, Charlotte *enters.*

SCENE XII.

Y. FREEMAN.

Ah! is the Cloud,
That hover'd o'er my Head, ſo ſoon diſpers'd?
It is, it is, and ev'ry Miſt expel'd;
And the gay Sun breaks brighter on my Eye.
See the dear Angel of my Comfort comes!
Say, heav'nly Fair, tell me, thou faithful Bride,
By what aſſiſting Pow'r you broke the Toils
Which my Foes pitch'd for you, and ſhun'd their Hands,
To find your conſtant and your tender Mate?

CHARLOTTE.

I wanted, and I ſought, no Pow'r but Love
To guide me to my faithful *Freeman*'s Arms.
Your gentle Father, when I enter'd here,
Gave me a Welcome, call'd me lovely Gueſt,
And ſay'd, go in, and find one that will give
You as much Comfort as you bring to him.

Y. FREEMAN.

You ſhall find Comfort and a Welcome here:
I'll be the Caſtle of my Love's Defence.

SCENE XIII.

FREEMAN *ſenr. enters with a Letter in his Hand.*

FREEMAN *ſenr.*

Hail my lov'd Son, and my lov'd Daughter hail:
The Storm which held ye from the wiſh'd-for Shore
Is lay'd, and an unruffled Calm ſucceeds.

Y. FREEMAN.

Bleſs'd as I am, I'm ſure my Father brings
Some heav'nly Tidings to enhance my Joy.

CHARLOTTE.

As from a Night paſs'd in uneaſy Dreams,
I ſee the Dawning of a cheerful Morn.

FREEMAN *ſenr.*

Here, *Lewis*, take and read it to your Wife;
And pour into her Ear a Balm that ſoon
Will reach her tender Heart, and cure what Pains
May ſtill be lurking in it.

Young Freeman *reads the Letter.*

Sir, the Ills
Of Fortune, and the reaſonable Perſuaſions
Of her whom I muſt call the beſt of Wives,
Join'd with a warm Affection for my Daughter,

Have

Have brought me to a Senſe of my Miſtake,
When I oppos'd a Match on which depends
The Happyneſs of my dear Child. I don't
Preſume to make any Propoſals to you:
To you and your Family I commend her:
With a free Heart I give the Girl; and I
Shall yield myſelf contented to the Grave,
Whene'er the Day ſhall come that calls me there,
Being ſatisfy'd that I have made her happy
By this laſt Act of mine. My heart is now
Diveſted of all Enmity to you:
May with your Years your Happyneſs encreaſe,
Whate'er ſhall be the future Lot of *Briar*.

Charlotte *looks into the Letter.*

'Tis my dear Father's Hand, and Bleſſings on him!
Excuſe my Tears; for they are Tears of Joy.

Y. FREEMAN.

O! my much lov'd, and much deſerving, *Charlotte*,
This Change, ſo unexpected, in your Father
Commands my Admiration and my Love:
I'm reſtleſs till I claſp him to my Breaſt,
And let him know how much he ſhares my Heart.

FREEMAN *ſenr.*

I'll riſe To-morrow with the Sun, and pay
An early Viſit to my Brother, and
I'll greet him truly with a Brother's Love:
I'll clear the Brow of Need; the Ills of Fortune,
Which he complains of, I will ſoon remove:
I will prevail on him, and on his Wife,

That

That fair Example of connubial Love,
To come and paſs the joyful Day with us.
The merry Bells ſhall wake the cheerful Morn,
And call the Neighbours round to *Freeman*'s Hall;
There ſhall they feaſt, and quaff the plenteous Juice,
Wiſhing the lovely Bride and Bridegroom Joy.
My Wife and I will, with unſparing Hands,
Attend our welcome Gueſts, and let no want
Of nuptial Merryment diſgrace the Day.

Y. FREEMAN.

Now, *Charlotte*, thou art mine, and I am thine,
By ev'ry Ty of Duty and of Love.
What to our Parents do we owe? Our Lives,
And, what's more precious, that our Lives are bleſs'd.
When o'er the ſpacious Globe my Eyes I throw,
And view the various Sons of Pow'r below,
The fertile Soils where mighty'ſt Monarchs reign,
O'er eaſtern Beautys, and th' extended Plain,
I wou'd not change, to be of all poſſeſs'd,
The lovelyer Empire of my *Charlotte*'s Breaſt.

The End of the Second ACT.

ACT

ACT III. SCENE I.

SCENE *a* GARDEN.

Young FREEMAN *and* CHARLOTTE.

Y. FREEMAN.

THIS Morning's Sun ſhines on the happyeſt Huſband
That ever yet poſſeſs'd a lovely Bride.
Behold, my Love, the ſplendid Eye of Day
Looks o'er the Hills in Brightneſs all array'd,
While at our Feet the Flow'rs ſend up their Sweets,
And ev'ry Tree, and Buſh, is Melody,
As if all Nature hail'd us to our Bliſs.

CHARLOTTE.

I'm ſurely bleſs'd beyond the Lot of Wives:
I cou'd ſay much upon our happy State.

Y. FREEMAN.

Hide not a Bluſh, a Bluſh the Morning wears.

CHARLOTTE.

I've not a Want, my deareſt *Freeman*, now,
But my poor Mother's and my Father's Smiles;
Which I ſhall ſoon behold; for your good Father
Went early out to ſeek the the wiſh'd-for Gueſts,
And bring them hither.

Y. FREEMAN.

Swift ye Minutes run,
And bring to my Embrace that honour'd Pair,

To

To whom I owe the Spring of all my Joys!
In this dear Boſom of unrival'd Sweets
Is all the Treaſure of my Soul repos'd.

SCENE II.

WELDON *enters.*

WELDON.

There ſtands a Friend, ſo much he ſhares my Heart,
Whoſe Peace I value equal to my own;
Yet muſt his Ears receive a Tale from me
Which to his early, his ecſtatic, Joys
Will prove like Blightings to the budding Flow'rs:
But 'tis a Tale that, if I ſhou'd not tell it,
He ſoon muſt hear from a leſs friendly Voice.
[*To himſelf.*
Joy to my *Freeman* and his charming Bride;
And much I wiſh that I cou'd give you both,
As you deſerve, more Comfort than I bring.

Y. FREEMAN.

Welcome the dear Companion of my Youth,
My much lov'd *Weldon:* thou art come to ſhare,
And to encreaſe, the Pleaſures of the Day:
But, my dear faithful Friend, methinks you wear
A Sadneſs in your Countenance, that ſuits
The preſent Hour but ill.

WELDON.

I've at my Heart
A Burden which I muſt unload to you,

And

And that to you alone; and, tho the Seaſon
Seems but ill choſen for a Taſk like this,
It muſt not be delay'd.

Y. FREEMAN.

Go in, my Love:
Thou Beauty who art always in my Eye!

CHARLOTTE.

Whate'er my Beauty is, my only Pride
Is plac'd in my Obedience and my Love. [*She goes.*

SCENE III.

WELDON.

Freeman, we've long been Friends; and, when at College,
We've often turn'd, with an enquiring Eye,
Together o'er the philoſophic Page;
Thence have we learn'd that true Philoſophy
Conſiſts in bearing Ills inevitable
With the ſame Patience as we'd view a Storm,
Which is not in our Pow'r to ſtop or lay.

Y. FREEMAN.

So well I know my Friend that I am ſure
He wou'd not bring a Trifle to my Ear
Prepar'd with ſuch Solemnity as this.
Speak what you have to ſay; I am reſign'd.

WELDON.

I'm glad you are; for you have much to bear.

Y. FREEMAN.

What can affect my Peace? My *Charlotte*'s well,

And ſhe is mine, and worthy my firſt Care:
But hold, I now begin to doubt my Pow'r.
If the ſad Story which you have to tell
Is of the Sorrows which you bear yourſelf,
I ſhall break in upon the Joys which I
Propos'd to-day, and mix my Griefs with thine.

WELDON.

Your Tenderneſs for me makes me already
Anticipate the Anguiſh to myſelf,
Which you too ſoon muſt feel: howe'er, reſolve
To bear it like a Man. Be ſure I will
Not leave the Friend I love, my ſecond ſelf,
In the Diſtreſs with which I ſhall o'erwhelm you,
For I will keep a friendly ſtretch'd-out Hand,
Till I have pull'd you out, or ſunk with you.
Stand firm; be ready for the Stroke.

Y. FREEMAN.

I am.
You ſee a ſturdy Oak that well will bear
The Buffeting of the contending Winds.

WELDON.

Stand firm I ſay again. Within this Hour
I ſaw your Father ſeiz'd, and haul'd to Jail.

Y. FREEMAN.

At that I'm more ſurpris'd than terrify'd:
The Action muſt be forg'd, he's not in Debt.

WELDON.

This is but as a Breeze that only moves
The Leaves, and has not Force to ſhake them off:

This you bear well; and, as the Winds ariſe,
Keep ſteady as the Oak, and fortify
Your Mind with Reſolution; for the Charge
Againſt your Father is no leſs than Murder.

Y. FREEMAN.

He never cou'd delight in Blood, but rather
Wou'd ſpill his own to ſave another's: yet
Go on, and tell me who's the murder'd Perſon.

WELDON.

Give me your Hand; and ſtand againſt this Blaſt,
And you may bear the Reſt.—Your *Charlotte*'s Father
Is dead.

Y. FREEMAN.

Murder'd by whom? Not by my Father;
For ſince your Arbitration of the Diff'rence
Betwixt them, they were Friends, without Reſerve,
And by the ſtricteſt Bonds which cou'd be bound:
There's in our Familys ſo great a Change,
That all our Hearts are one. I have ſome Hopes
That the Report of *Briar*'s Death is falſe.

WELDON.

I ſaw him breathleſs, and beſmear'd with Blood,
And ſaw your Father, after he was ſeiz'd,
And hear'd the Charge, the fatal Charge, againſt him,
With ev'ry Circumſtance attending it.

Y. FREEMAN.

I'll lay my Hand upon your friendly Arm,
While you relate me each particular
Of this myſterious melancholly Tale.

WELDON.

Briar, unhappy to his End, was found,
In his own Fields, dead and beſmear'd with Blood,
And in his Side a Wound; your Father by him,
And in his Hand the Staff that gave the Blow,
The iron Spike at the ſharp End of which
Was cover'd o'er with Blood, and, as they try'd,
Exactly fill'd the Wound: thus ſtands the Caſe.

Y. FREEMAN.

This is like Thunder from the Hand of Heav'n;
And I muſt yield to it.

WELDON,

Bear up, my Friend;
Droop not beneath the Storm that beats upon you.
I will uſe ev'ry honeſt Art to heal
Your Wounds, and to emerge you from Diſtreſs.
I'm going now, confide, dear *Freeman*, in me,
Upon a Work that to the World will ſhew
My Senſe of Honour, Juſtice, and of Truth. [*He goes.*

SCENE IV.

Mrs. FREEMAN *enters.*

Mrs. FREEMAN.

Was ever pleaſant Morn o'ercaſt like this!
O! my lov'd Son, for much expected Joy,
Array yourſelf with Sadneſs and Deſpair.
I have receiv'd ſuch fatal Tidings as
I dread to tell.

Y. FREE.

Y. FREEMAN.

They have already reach'd
My Ear, and deeply enter'd in my Heart.
Madam, retire, and leave to me to guide
The ſhipwreck'd Bark thro ſuch a Storm as this.
What Comfort I can bring my honour'd Mother
She may be ſure I'll give.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

Talk not to me
Of Comfort; I'll have none; for none do I
Deſerve. O! cou'd I but recall the Hour
In which my Pride drove me to *Briar*'s Houſe,
Contented I'd meet Death in any Form!

Y. FREEMAN.

My deareſt Mother, add no recent Griefs
To thoſe which now are ſcarcely to be borne.
O! my poor *Charlotte*, what haſt thou to feel!

Mrs. FREEMAN.

The Torrent has o'erwhelm'd that lovely Flow'r;
Which I committed to the Care of thoſe
Who will not be unmindful of their Charge.

Y. FREEMAN.

That Charge be only mine.

SCENE V.

As he is going CHARLOTTE *enters.*

CHARLOTTE.

Where's *Freeman?* Where's
My Huſband? Are you here? Give me my Father.—

Is this the Joy, is this the Paradiſe,
The nuptial Boon which, with a thouſand Sighs,
And glowing Kiſſes, you promis'd me?---What?
Sent you your Father forth to murder mine?
Know that the Wound of which my Father dy'd
Has kill'd your Wife, has kill'd your loving Wife.

Y. FREEMAN.

O! think that ev'ry Tear my *Charlotte* ſheds,
Draws from her *Freeman*'s Heart the ſanguin Drops.

CHARLOTTE.

O! O! [*She leans on him, and ſighs.*

Y. FREEMAM.

Yield not, my Love, yield not, my Life,
So much to Grief; for ev'ry Sigh you fetch
Flys to my Breaſt, and does the Dagger's Office.
Soul of my Soul look up, and ſee, in me,
A Father, Huſband, Lover, and a Friend.

Mrs. FREEMAN

O! Sight of Woe! too much for me to bear!
I muſt withdraw myſelf, or ſink beneath
The Weight of Sorrow which their Griefs bring on me.
Hide me ye Hills, and cover me from Day;
Nor ever let me taſte of Comfort more,
Till my lov'd Children, and my much lov'd Huſband,
Are free from Danger, and to Joy reſtor'd. [*She goes.*

SCENE VI.

CHARLOTTE.

My Father! O! my Father! Wretched Wife!

Y. FREE-

Y. FREEMAN.

Your Father's Death is yet a Myſtery,
A Myſt'ry which To-morrow may unveil.

CHARLOTTE.

To-morrow will not give me back my Father:
Methinks I hear him cry, *Charlotte*, my Child,
Fill not the Arms of him whoſe barb'rous Sire
Imbrued his Hands in the ſame Blood of which
You was a Part: and muſt you be obey'd?
That too is hard: my Love is innocent,
My *Freeman* is not guilty: O! my Heart!

Y. FREEMAN.

Here ſit, my Love, here let my *Charlotte* reſt;
And I'll be near you, near my Soul's Support,

He comes forwards.

Leſt in the dreadful Abſence of her Reaſon,
She ſhou'd commit ſome Violence upon
The lovely'ſt Frame that Beauty e'er was caſt in.

He goes towards her.

If there are Miniſters of Heav'n to guard
The innocent, and Virtue is their Care,
Here let them take a Charge that's worthy them,
And from her fair unblemiſh'd Seat of Thought
Drive ev'ry Image of Affliction; there
Let no Appearances Admittance gain
But what are fraught with Joy: to her Mind's Eye
Shew the fair Proſpect of our future Loves;
And let no Traces of her former Griefs
Be lurking there; but let her riſe to Bliſs.

SCENE

SCENE VII.

A SERVANT *enters.*

SERVANT.

With Sorrow I approach my much lov'd Maſter,
When I muſt bring Addition to his Woes.
The virtuous Matron's dead; the Weight of Grief,
Preſſing too faſt upon her gentle Nature,
Has ſtop'd her Springs of Life; and ſhe's no more.

Y. FREEMAN.

Who is no more?

SERVANT.

Your *Charlotte's* Mother's dead. [Charlotte *faints.*

Y. FREEMAN

She ſinks, ſhe faints; and if the Angel's fled
To her original Seat of Bliſs, to Heav'n,
I've Nothing more to manage here on Earth.
[*Turning to the Servant.*
This is a Tale you ſhou'd have told to me,
To me alone, that at a proper Seaſon,
More fit than this, it might have reach'd her Ear.
O! *Charlotte!* O! my Wife! hear, hear, the Voice
Of him that calls you back to Life, to Love.——
Her Breaſt is cold, her Eyes have loſs'd their Luſtre;
But her Breath's ſweeter than the *Syrian* Roſe.
O! charm me with the Muſic of thy Voice!——
She breathes; and on her Lips Carnations bloom;
And her Eyes cheer me like the Morning Sun.

CHAR-

CHARLOTTE.

Who calls me back to Life, to Wretchedneſs?

Y. FREEMAN.

To Life, my Soul, and Love, to Love, and me;
For, after ſuch a black and diſmal Storm,
The Face of Heav'n muſt ſoon begin to clear.

CHARLOTTE.

Mine is no common Caſe, no vulgar Miſery:
A loving Father and the tendereſt Mother
That ever a poor Child was bleſs'd with, gone,
Gone, and for ever loſs'd to wretched me.
Who, not diveſted of Humanity,
Can ſee my Woes with an unpitying Eye?
And what Daughter (I am no Daughter now!)
What Child, what Orphan Child, that has a Senſe
Of Duty and of Love, can think of Joy,
Or can, in my Condition, think of Life?
Come, Death, to one that earneſtly invokes you,
O! come thou friendly everlaſting Sleep,
And cloſe my Eyes in Night that knows no Dawn.

Y. FREEMAN.

Periſh a thouſand Worlds rather than you,
Than you, to me a World of Sweets, ſhou'd give
Thoſe ſcarcely taſted Beautys to the Grave!
'Tis Virtue now to live, and great the Virtue,
To ſave that Life which all depends on thine.

CHARLOTTE.

If I can live, I need not ſtrive to love.——
O! *Freeman*, take me to your honeſt Heart;

And, if I keep the full Poſſeſſion there,
Life will be worth my Care, preſerv'd by you.
Tho ſtrong the Pains which have beſieg'd me round,
Your Love muſt be the Cure of all my Grief.

Y. FREEMAN.

Thou ſweetly drooping Flow'r, come to this Breaſt,
Which has no Room for any Gueſt but you.
I have no Thoughts of Paradiſe beyond
What my dear *Charlotte*, what my Love, can give:
I have no Wiſh, but what I wiſh for you:
Wiſh I to live, 'tis that my Life may be
Employ'd in tender Offices to you:
Wou'd I behold Encreaſe of Flocks and Herds,
'Tis that I wou'd encreaſe my Love's fair Dow'r:
Have I delight to ſee my Garden yield
The faireſt Flow'rs which e'er adorn'd the Spring,
'Tis that they may adorn a fairer Flow'r:
If, when I walk my Orchard round, I hope
To ſee my Fruit-trees bending with their Weight,
'Tis that I may prepare a grateful Feaſt,
And to the cheerful Banquet call my Love:
Whate'er I wiſh to have, or wiſh to be,
'Tis to improve thy Bliſs, and merit thee. [*They go.*

SCENE VIII.

The Court ſitting, the Judge, *the Jury, Witneſſes,* Freeman *ſenr. at the Bar, and* Weldon *Foreman of the Jury.*

JUDGE.

Hear and conſider well the Charge again ſthim.

Seven

Seven Witneſſes of Reputation here
Swear that they found him ſtriding o'er the dead,
And in his Hand a Staff, whoſe bloody Point
Exactly fill'd the Wound, freſh bleeding then:
From what we've hear'd we muſt our Judgement paſs;
In mine he's guilty; but the Sentence reſts
In you the Arbitrators of his Life:
You, who are foremoſt of the Jury, ſpeak.

WELDON.

He's innocent.

JUDGE.

Is that the Voice of all?

WELDON.

I ſpeak, my Lord, th' unbyaſs'd Voice of all.

JUDGE.

Now, by the ſacred Majeſty of Heav'n,
That ſees and judges all, the Blood of him,
Our fellow Subject, who was foully murder'd,
Crys loud for Juſtice; Blood for Blood repay:
In him the King, his Wife, and only Child,
Have loſs'd a Subject, Huſband, and a Father:
The King, his Wife, and Child, of you demand
That Juſtice ſhou'd be executed here.

WELDON.

Give me your Promiſe that his Life's ſecure,
And I'll produce in Court the Man that kill'd him;
Nor do I aſk that Promiſe but on Terms
Which you may grant with Honour to your Name.
If it appears that he who kill'd him did it

Neither in Wrath, nor with his Will's Conſent,
But in his own Defence, your Promiſe ſtands.

JUDGE.

I freely give it; and be Heaven's high Judge
The Witneſs of my Heart.

WELDON.

I am the Man.

JUDGE.

Bold and intrepid.——Quick proceed to eaſe
Th' aſtoniſh'd Court, that's full of Expectation.
Quick and proceed I ſay.

WELDON.

Behold in me
The Man that kill'd him, but no Murderer.

JUDGE.

Now to the Fact.

WELDON.

Tho much my Mind is ſhock'd
At the Remembrance of the fatal Deed,
And gladly wou'd avoid th' unpleaſing Tale,
Yet, in Regard to Truth and my fair Name,
I will begin.——Early in the Morning, as
My Cuſtom was, I walk'd o'er *Briar*'s Grounds,
And met him unexpected in my Way:
I took Occaſion then to talk to him
Of an Account that had been long betwixt us:
As our Diſpute grew high, I thought he us'd
A Language too ingrateful to the Man
Who had been a patient Creditor ſo long:
He did indeed provoke me, by his Uſage,

For

For rude he was, to treat him with more Warmth
Than ever yet I treated any Man,
And to reproach him with Severity:
Th' unhappy Man, impatient of Rebuke,
Struck on my Temples with an oaken Staff:
Amidſt my Rage the Stick I wreſted from him,
And, ſmarting with the Blow, drove at his Side;
When ſuddenly he fell, and with a Groan
Cry'd, *I've deſerv'd my Death*, and ſpoke no more:
Aſtoniſh'd at the Blood which flow'd from him,
I view'd the Staff; at the ſmall End of which
Was a ſharp iron Spike, which had before
Eſcap'd my Eye. Surpris'd I look'd around,
And, ſeeing no one near, I walk'd away,
And ſighing thought the poor ill-fated Man
Had too ſeverely pay'd the Debt he ow'd me.
My Sorrows with my Story ſo encreaſe,
I beg a Reſpite here. My Friend can beſt,
For he beſt knows, relate what happen'd next,
When, walking o'er the Field, he found him dead.

JUDGE.

Th' almighty Judge knows how my Soul rejoices
At this our Clearing of the innocent.
Take up the Thread of this ſurpriſing Tale;
[*To* Freeman *ſenr.*
And balk not our Attention with Delay.

FREEMAN *ſenr.*

Gay, and as joyful as the Sun, I went
To aſk th' unhappy Man, that's dead, to come

To my Son's Wedding-feaſt; but, as I croſs'd
The Field, I ſaw him lying on the Ground:
Then down I lay'd my Staff to raiſe him up;
But, to my vaſt Surpriſe, I found him dead:
Griev'd and confus'd, ſcarce knowing what I did,
Inſtead of my own Staff, I took up his:
Theſe Neighbours paſſing by, and ſeeing us
In this Condition, ſeiz'd me as his Murd'rer:
They hurry'd me before a Magiſtrate,
And then, the Evidence being ſtrong, to Jail.
Weldon, my worthy Friend, as he beſt knows
What follow'd, he can beſt purſue the Tale.

JUDGE.

In conſcious Virtue bold, as you begun,
Conclude, in your own Innocence ſecure. [To *Weldon*.

WELDON.

From the firſt Moment that I ſaw him ſeiz'd,
I was reſolv'd to reſcue him from Death,
E'en if I dy'd myſelf. The Tryal near,
Firſt I endeavour'd to be of the Jury:
How in that Office I've diſcharg'd my Truſt,
Ye've ſeen: I hope conſiſtent with my Charge.

JUDGE.

An Office that requires the pureſt Mind!
They whom their Country chuſe for ſuch a Truſt,
Upon whoſe Verdict, as on Fate, depend
Our Propertys, our Lives, and Libertys,
Shou'd to the aweful Seat of Juſtice bring
An Ear that's deaf to the Deceiver's Voice,

A Breaſt untainted, and a Hand unſtain'd:
And he that fills the ſolemn Judgement-Seat
Shou'd not too raſhly paſs the dreadful Sentence
On the accus'd, but weigh each Circumſtance,
Till not a ſingle Doubt's left in the Scale,
Then judge with Reaſon, and decree with Truth.

FREEMAN *ſenr.*

Thanks to my gen'rous Friend! Thou Soul of Honour! [*To Weldon.*
Haſte, with me haſte, to my lov'd Family;
For my Heart pants to take them to my Breaſt;
And as the Sun breaks from behind a Cloud,
To cheer the glad Horizon with his Sight,
I'll throw my ſable Weeds aſide, and bleſs
My little drooping Houſehold with the Proſpect
Of Days of Plenty and untainted Joys.

WELDON.

I pant to ſee my Friend, your Son, my *Freeman*,
That I may pour into his Heart the Balm
Of ſalutary Friendſhip and of Love.
Our Preſence, well I know, will to your Wife,
Your Son, and much afflicted Daughter, bring
Comfort, and Wiſhes of long Life and Love.
Let not the virtuous Sufferer deſpair,
But all his Wrongs with Reſolution bear:
Repining will not eaſe, but add to, Grief,
While patient Innocence will find Relief.

The E N D.

THE EPILOGUE.

Spoke by Mrs. GIFFARD.

HOW ſtrange the Whim! Our Author bids me ſay
That Epilogues are Poiſon to a Play:
He bids me, while for your Applauſe I'm ſuing,
Scorn and condemn the very Thing I'm doing.
Our Epilogues, he ſays, ſerve but to ſhew
The Farce of Virtue, and the Joke of Woe;
And, if the Moral ſhou'd affect your Breaſt,
The Epilogue will turn it to a Jeſt:
So in our Churches, when the learned Prieſt
His Flock has treated with a ſacred Feaſt,
The Organ, which ſhou'd help to make devout,
Strikes up a Jig, and ſends them dancing out.

ERRATA.

PAge 24, Ver. 20, after *myſelf for you*, read the following, &c.

BRIAR.

Tho you do thwart my Will,
I cannot hate you; for you've always been
A good and an obedient Wife.

Page 31, V. 14, for *Pleaſure* read *Treaſure.*
Page 32, over Speech the 3d, add *Mrs. to Bri[ar].*
Page 32, over the laſt Speech, for *Biar* read *Bri[ar].*

MVSEVM BRITAN NICVM